

care reform. Now we have to make up for a lost opportunity. And now seniors will bear the burden and pay the price for gridlock. Let us agree that the first rule of reform will be the same as it is in medicine: First, do no harm.

Let us agree to put partisan interests aside and put seniors first.

Let us agree that while good health care requires choice, managed care, when it is just managed profit, is wrong.

That prevention, home care, prescription medicine is quality health care for high quality lives.

Finally, let us pledge that we will not destroy Medicare in our effort to reform Medicare.

REPUBLICANS TACKLE FINANCIAL PROBLEMS, SEEK A BALANCED BUDGET

(Mr. CHABOT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, over the last 4 months the liberal Democrats in Congress have been feeding the public a steady diet of class warfare rhetoric. Somehow they think that the budget problems we face will magically disappear if the phrase tax cut for the rich is repeated over and over.

This strategy exposes the fact that liberal Democrats have a lack of conviction in solving the Nation's problems. They offer no leadership and they seek to divide America along class lines.

Since the start of the 104th Congress, Republicans have offered a vision of America that can solve its problems and we proved that we can keep our promises.

Republicans here in the House are convinced that we must balance the budget. But balancing the budget is not just about money it is about our children's future. For too long now, the Federal Government has operated in the red. The resulting debt is a threat to America's future generations that must be dealt with.

So while Democrats offer class division and dance around the tough issues, Republicans offer a return to a balanced budget.

REPUBLICANS CONSIDERING CUTTING MEDICARE

(Mr. HILLIARD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HILLIARD. Mr. Speaker, today the Republicans in Congress are considering proposals which will cut Medicare funding by billions of dollars, causing large reductions in Medicare services which will have a devastating effect on our senior citizens. We cannot allow this to occur. Our seniors are already on fixed incomes, with many of them having a tough time making ends meet from month to month. How can the Republicans in the light of day

even contemplate slashing our senior citizens at a time like this, when they deserve more and more health care?

Mr. President and Mr. Speaker, one of the speakers mentioned a minute ago that the President did not participate, that he is AWOL in the Medicare debate. I would like to say that the President is not AWOL, there is no need today to deal with the Medicare crisis. The Medicare crisis is only the political crisis that the Republicans have started this date.

USING COMMON SENSE TO FIX THE BUDGET

(Mr. JONES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, if an average American were to pile up huge debts and engage in reckless financial behavior, that person would eventually be held accountable, either by the law or by his creditors.

But here in Washington, somehow, the reverse is true. The Federal Government has become immune to accountability. They have racked-up trillions in debt and yet continue their irresponsible spending. Unfortunately there is a price for all this irresponsibility. That price will be shouldered by average Americans who are not responsible for the failed policies of the past.

If we do nothing to remedy the out-of-control spending here in Washington, our children will suffer a very dim future. It does not take a rocket scientist to figure out that spending more than you earn is not the wisest thing—especially in the long run. And, it does not take a wizard to fix the budget. All it takes is commonsense, determination, honesty, and a realization that we simply cannot continue with the old Washington way of doing things.

REPUBLICAN DOUBLESPEAK ON MEDICARE CUTS

(Mr. McDERMOTT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to warn my colleagues to beware of Republican doublespeak on Medicare cuts.

The greatest doublespeak is that Republicans will reform Medicare to give seniors more choices by giving them vouchers to buy private insurance.

What they do not say is that the vouchers will not be worth enough to enable them to buy an insurance policy that gives them the choices they have today.

They do not say that the value of the vouchers will force seniors into the lowest cost and most restrictive HMO's.

They do not say that the value of the voucher is going to be ratcheted down every year to become worth less and

less until seniors are saddled with virtually all the costs of their health care.

They do not say that the vouchers will toss seniors to swim alone in the perilous and confusing currents of the private insurance market—the same market that has reduced their children's choices.

Vouchers are not more choice. They spell the end of Medicare coverage that seniors—and their families—rely on.

FIXING MEDICARE

(Mr. GOSS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, it takes guts to do what is right instead of just doing what is popular. President Clinton's own Medicare Board of Trustees, which includes Cabinet Secretaries Donna Shalala, Robert Rubin, and Robert Reich, believe that under current law, Medicare will be bankrupt by the year 2002, or possibly even earlier. These are the President's people telling us. Doing nothing is disaster; doing nothing is a formula for bankruptcy. But what solutions have the Clinton Democrats proposed to correct this problem? None. I hear rhetoric today, but I do not hear solutions.

Mr. Speaker, the Clinton Democrats are showing a willingness to let the system collapse by maintaining the status quo. On the other hand, the Republican majority will rise to the challenge of trying to show some guts and offer some real solutions to preserve, to protect and to improve Medicare. The Republican majority is committed to honor our contract with older Americans. I know I am one, and I represent a lot of others.

Mr. Speaker, it is real simple. The program is going broke, and we are going to fix it because we care about senior citizens. We want them to have good quality, affordable health care options, and we know doing nothing is disaster, so we are going to do something.

HOW NOT TO CUT THE BUDGET

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, first there was school lunches. Republicans voted to cut school lunches to pay for tax cuts for American's wealthiest citizens. Then Republicans proposed cuts in student loans to pay for tax cuts for the wealthiest special interests. Now Republicans want to cut Medicare services. They want to increase premiums, and copayments and deductibles.

Mr. Speaker, I am a deficit hawk. I want to balance the budget. But we cannot balance the budget, we should not balance the budget, by cutting taxes for the rich, by building star wars, and increasing military spending,

and by cuts in Medicare, in school lunches, and in student loans.

INTRODUCTION OF HOUSE RESOLUTION OPPOSING REPEAL OF GUN CONTROL LAWS

(Mr. SKAGGS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SKAGGS. Mr. Speaker, the Oklahoma City bombing has left Americans looking for ways to prevent other terrorist assaults on innocent victims. One thing Congress can do is refuse to let the gun lobby blow away the landmark gun control laws passed during the 103d Congress.

Today I am introducing a resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the Brady bill, the assault weapons ban, and the juvenile handgun ban should not be repealed. These laws are balanced efforts to control crime that are proving effective in keeping guns out of the wrong hands, while respecting the rights of law-abiding Americans to own firearms. To let these laws be tossed aside as a political favor to a special interest would be a national tragedy.

At the beginning of this Congress, the gun lobby announced its plan to get these laws taken off the books. They have paused in their effort in the wake of the Oklahoma tragedy. But rest assured, it is only a tactical pause, and it will not last long.

Oklahoma City is chilling evidence that a few individuals with extremist views can use weapons of enormous power to kill and maim. Tragically, the toll inflicted each day with handguns and military-style assault weapons is almost as great.

Our commitment to fighting domestic terrorism should start with keeping the Brady bill, the assault weapons ban and the juvenile handgun ban in effect. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

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HAPPY TALK ON MEDICARE

(Mr. BONIOR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, don't be fooled by all the Republican happy talk on Medicare.

They're not cutting Medicare in order to fix the system.

The Republicans are cutting Medicare for one reason and one reason only: to pay for their tax cuts for the wealthy.

You see, the Republicans made an amazing discovery.

To pay for their tax cuts, they cannot just cut student loans and child nutrition programs and cops on the beat.

Even though they are cutting each and every one of those things it still leaves them about \$300 billion short.

So, now they're targeting Medicare.

And what is this going to mean to the average senior citizen?

It is going to mean higher copayments, higher premiums, less choice of doctors and it is going to cut into Social Security COLA's.

And this isn't just going to affect senior citizens.

Where is the average working family going to come up with the extra money to care for their parents and grandparents?

Mr. Speaker, Medicare is not a cash cow for tax cuts.

It is a sacred trust between the Government and the people.

It is time we keep that promise.

REPUBLICANS AND MEDICARE

(Mr. RICHARDSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, the Republicans are having a hard time explaining to 35 million Americans who rely on Medicare that their benefits will be cut to pay for a \$350 billion tax break for the wealthy.

Now, Republican leaders are attacking the President because he refuses to join them in slashing Medicare to pay for their unjust tax break. Republicans also fail to mention that the President has in fact extended the life of the Medicare fund in legislation that Republicans voted against last year.

The truth is that Republican cuts to Medicare would make the average Medicare recipient cough up \$900 more each year out of their own pockets.

In my State of New Mexico alone, 200,000 Americans will be forced to reduce their food budget or their heating costs to pay for this unfair tax cut.

Mr. Speaker, the President is right. We should favor Medicare reform that protects benefits for Americans, but cuts in Medicare should not pay for a tax break for the wealthy. The American people will not be fooled.

MEDICARE AND VETERANS

(Mrs. SCHROEDER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, as we all celebrate V-E Day and the wonderful generation that saved Europe from Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, what are we doing to them? Well, the Republicans are trying to take their Medicare and slash it away. What a way to salute them. This is the generation that saved the world. This is the generation that paid for the Marshall plan to rebuild the world, and now we are telling them they have also got to pay for the deficit so that the fat cats can have more tax cuts.

That is not fair. That is not the America they fought for. I hope that all this Medicare scare goes away.

MORE ON MEDICARE

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Medicare should not become a political football because millions of our seniors in America depend so heavily on it for their health care.

In today's edition of the Houston Chronicle that I picked up before I left home this morning, it talks about the Republicans laying plans to slash billions from the budget. The Republican majority should come up with a plan to reform the Medicare system but not cut \$250 billion, \$300 billion, \$400 billion out of it.

I spoke and met with many seniors yesterday in my district, and they want the fraud and abuse out of Medicare. But they do not want less health care than they have today.

The Medicare system was made solvent for 3 more years in 1993 without one Republican vote. Now the Republican majority is planning to cut it in the name of reform. The savings should be used to increase the benefits for seniors and increase the reimbursement rates and not just to pay for tax cuts. I cannot support billions in Medicare cuts when they would not help the system become more solvent in 7 years.

Medicare should be reformed but not to save \$380 billion and help pay for tax cuts for the rich U.S. citizens.

SLASHING MEDICARE

(Mr. WARD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the Republican proposal to slash Medicare spending over the next 5 years. I am reminded of the riddle, the riddle is, what is the difference between the Contract With America and a contract with the devil? The riddle is, what is the difference between the Contract With America and the contract with the devil?

The devil's contract still provides for our seniors and our children.

The fact that such cuts will devastate our hospitals across the country forcing many rural hospitals who rely on Medicare benefits to close sums up the problem.

This is not the way to provide the money that is needed to make the tax cuts that have been promised in this contract.

REPUBLICANS WANT TO REFORM MEDICARE

(Mr. BOEHNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, here we go, once again, down the path of spreading fear, fear that we are going to slash this and slash that.